



August 2002

EPA Fact Sheet Blackbird Mine Update: Cobalt, Idaho

EPA Proposes Cleanup Plan for the Blackbird Mine Site 30 Day Public Comment Period Begins August 12, 2002

*The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency invites you to comment on the proposed hazardous waste cleanup plan for the Blackbird Mine Site. Comments may be submitted either in writing or by providing oral comments to a court reporter at a public meeting on August 26, 2002. **Written comments must be postmarked before or on September 10, 2002 and sent to:***

**Fran Allans
US EPA - Idaho Operations Office
1435 North Orchard
Boise, ID 83706**

This fact sheet is a summary of the proposed plan. If you would like a copy of the Proposed Plan, please contact Mark Masarik at (208) 378-5761, or e-mail at: masarik.mark@epa.gov. You can also obtain a copy of the Proposed Plan directly from the internet by going to this address: <http://yosemite.epa.gov/r10/cleanup.nsf/sites/blackbird>.

PUBLIC MEETING

***Come To Discuss Cleanup Alternatives and
Provide Your Public Comment to EPA on the Proposed Plan.***

Date: August 26, 2002

Time: 6:30-8:30pm

Location: Panther Creek Inn on Panther Creek Road

If you need directions to the meeting, please call:

Pete Peters, U.S. Forest Service, at (208) 879-4158

or Fran Allans, EPA Project Manager, at (208) 378-5775.

Disability Reasonable Accommodation Notice:

If you need a reasonable accommodation for a disability, please contact Mark Masarik at (208) 378-5761 (voice). TTY/TDD users please call the Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339. Please provide one week notice for special requests not related to ongoing programs and services.

ABOUT THE PROPOSED PLAN

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is proposing the final cleanup plan for the Blackbird Mine site. This fact sheet has been written for those who would like a brief outline of the preferred alternative. EPA encourages you to review the entire Proposed Plan and the Administrative Record and comment on any of the cleanup alternatives that were analyzed.

The Proposed Plan outlines EPA's preferred alternative for addressing the environmental contamination at the site. The Proposed Plan focuses on reducing the remaining human health risk, improving water quality in the creeks draining into Panther Creek, and improving water quality in Panther Creek to allow for the return of salmon, bull trout and resident fish.

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The Plan also summarizes information gathered about how widespread the contamination is at the site. This information can be found in more detail in a report called the Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study.

Information about the investigation and proposed cleanup has been consolidated into an Administrative Record which is available for your review at the locations listed at the end of this fact sheet. Additional information may be added to the Administrative Record during the public comment period.

EPA'S PREFERRED CLEANUP ALTERNATIVE

EPA has divided this site into three areas for cleanup purposes. EPA is recommending the following cleanup actions for each of those areas.

Meadow Creek/Blackbird Creek Drainage

1. Seeps in upper Meadow Creek would be collected, then diverted to the existing water treatment plant for treatment and discharge.
2. A soil cover with native grasses and plants will be placed on the West Fork Tailings Impoundment to reduce infiltration and contamination going into Blackbird Creek. In addition, groundwater from the impoundment would be collected and treated. EPA may consider some additional studies to determine if treatment of the West Fork Tailings Impoundment water will be required to meet cobalt cleanup levels in surface water.
3. Removal and stabilization of overbank deposits in Blackbird Creek. Stabilization would consist of grading and placement of rock.

Total costs including 30 years operation and maintenance (O&M): \$6.8 to \$10.3 million

Bucktail Creek Drainage

1. Groundwater seeping into Bucktail Creek below the 7000 ft dam would be collected and treated. Bucktail Creek would be diverted in a pipeline

or ditch to bypass South Fork Big Deer Creek, and discharge directly into Big Deer Creek. Bucktail Creek, South Fork of Big Deer Creek, and Big Deer Creek sediments will be addressed through natural recovery.

Total costs including 30 years operation and maintenance (O&M): \$4.8 million

Panther Creek Drainage

The preferred alternative for Panther Creek is actually a combination of alternatives which include:

1. Removing contaminated soils along lower Panther Creek at several isolated areas that have not been cleaned up previously.
2. "Institutional controls" would restrict land use (such as residential development) to reduce human exposure to arsenic.

Total costs including 30 years operation and maintenance (O&M): \$300,000

Other Cleanup Alternatives Evaluated

Meadow Creek/Blackbird Creek Drainage

Several cleanup alternatives were evaluated for the Meadow Creek/Blackbird Creek drainage. These include performing no additional work beyond that which was accomplished previously (referred to as the "No Further Action" alternative) to the complete removal of both overbank deposits and in-stream sediments in Blackbird Creek.

Bucktail Creek Drainage

The range of cleanup alternatives includes no further action to sediment removal in Bucktail, South Fork Big Deer, and Big Deer Creeks with on-site disposal of those sediments.

Panther Creek Alternatives

The alternatives considered ranged from no further action to removal of overbank deposits and institutional controls.

Background

Blackbird Mine is a now-closed mine located in Lemhi County, Idaho approximately 13 miles south of the Salmon River, and 25 miles west of Salmon, Idaho. Cobalt, gold, silver and copper ore were extracted from underground and open pit mining operations. The mining operations left an open pit (Blacktail Pit), several miles of underground workings, waste rock piles and a tailings disposal impoundment.

Cobalt, copper, iron and arsenic have been released to surface water, soils, stream sediments and groundwater at the Blackbird Mine. In addition, some contamination has been deposited downstream from the Site.

In May of 1993, EPA proposed that the site be placed on its National Priorities List (NPL) for further investigation and possible cleanup under the Superfund law. EPA reached agreement with the Potentially Responsible Parties to investigate the contamination and evaluate the cleanup options for the major areas of contamination at the mine.

The Potentially Responsible Parties, referred to as the Blackbird Mine Site Group, are Noranda Mining Inc., M.A. Hanna Co. and Intalco Corporation (formerly Alimet Corporation). The work by the Group is being performed under EPA oversight, and in consultation with the State of Idaho, U.S. Forest Service, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Some high priority work has already been done to collect and treat contaminated water running off of waste rock in the mine area, to stabilize waste rock piles and the West Fork Tailings Impoundment, and to remove soils contaminated with arsenic along the banks of Blackbird Creek and Panther Creek.

For More Information

If you have any questions about the proposed cleanup plan, please contact:

Fran Allans, EPA Project Manager
(208) 378-5775 *E-mail:* allans.fran@epa.gov

Please direct questions about the public meeting to:

Mark Masarik, EPA Community Involvement
(208) 378-5761 *E-mail:* masarik.mark@epa.gov

The Administrative Record containing documents pertaining to the investigation and cleanup of this site is available for your review at the following:

Salmon Public Library
204 Main Street
Salmon, ID
(208) 756-2311
Hours of operation:
Mon-Sat 10:00am-5:30pm
(Thursdays open til 7pm)

U.S EPA Idaho Operations Office
1435 N. Orchard
Boise, ID
(208) 378-5746
Office hours:
8am-5pm Monday through Friday

U.S. EPA
1200 Sixth Avenue
Records Center-7th Floor
Seattle, WA
(800) 424-4372 (ask for Records Center)
Office hours:
8am-5pm Monday through Friday

The Proposed Plan and a few of the major reports are also available at the Panther Creek Inn, Cobalt, ID.



United States
Environmental Protection
Agency

Region 10 (ECO-081)
1200 Sixth Avenue
Seattle WA 98101

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EPA FACT SHEET
BLACKBIRD MINE
Cobalt, Idaho